

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

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R 201111Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9949

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BANGKOK 1024

EXDIS

FOR ASST SEC HABIB FROM AMBASSADOR KINTNER

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, TH

SUBJ: CONGRESSMAN WOLFF'S VISIT TO THAILAND

REF: STATE 012253

1. THE DOCUMENT SHOWN TO CONGRESSMAN WOLFF WHEN HE WAS VISITING THAILAND BY COUNSELOR MAHLERT IS ENTITLED "TESTING TIME FOR US/THAI RELATIONS" DATED JUNE 10, 1974. I PERSONALLY WROTE THIS DOCUMENT UPON MY RETURN TO THAILAND AFTER MY INITIAL CONSULTATIONS IN WASHINGTON IN THE LATTER PART OF MAY BECAUSE I DID NOT BELIEVE THAT ALL OF THE SENIOR U.S. OFFICIALS WHOM I MET IN WASHINGTON WERE SENSITIVE TO THE CHANGES THAT HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN U.S.-THAI RELATIONS SINCE THE OCTOBER 1973 REVOLUTION. I ASKED MEHLERT TO SHOW THIS DOCUMENT TO CONGRESSMAN WOLFF AFTER THE CONGRESSMAN ADVISED ME THAT HE HAD BEEN SELECTED TO BECOME THE SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN FOR EAST ASIA FOR THE HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE AND I BELIEVED THAT HE WOULD FIND THIS OVERVIEW OF INTEREST AND VALUE TO HIM. I SENT THIS DOCUMENT TO MANY OF THE OFFICIALS I HAD TALKED TO IN WASHINGTON INCLUDING YOUR PREDECESSOR, AND THE COUNTRY DIRECTOR FOR THAI/BURMA AFFAIRS. SECTION IV OF THIS PAPER (PAGE 9) DEALS WITH "NARCOTICS--COOPERATION AND IRRITATION."

2. THERE IS NOTHING IN THIS SECTION WHICH INDICATES THAT
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MISSION POLICY HAS DOWNGRADED THE IMPORTANCE OF OUR EFFORTS

AGAINST NARCOTICS TRAFFIC OR THAT POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS "MUST TAKE PRECEDENCE OVER OUR ANTI-NARCOTICS EFFORTS." IN FACT, OUR EFFORTS IN THIS FIELD HAVE STEADILY INCREASED AND HAVE, I BELIEVE, MADE GOOD PROGRESS. THE PAPER DOES INDICATE, HOWEVER, THAT OUR NARCOTICS EFFORTS MUST BE CONDUCTED IN THE LIGHT OF OUR OVER-ALL RELATIONSHIPS HERE. IN CERTAIN RESPECTS US NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS WHEN INADVERTENTLY PUBLICIZED HERE CAN BE AS POLITICALLY SENSITIVE AS SOME OF THE PROBLEMS THAT I HAVE HAD TO DEAL WITH IN CONJUNCTION WITH OUR INTELLIGENCE EFFORTS.

3. NOTWITHSTANDING MY CONCERN WITH THE POLITICAL SENSITIVITY OF THE ENFORCEMENT ASPECTS OF OUR NARCOTICS PROGRAM, I HAVE TAKEN VERY SERIOUSLY THE CHARGE PLACED UPON ME BY THE WHITE HOUSE AND THE STATE DEPARTMENT TO REDUCE THE FLOW OF NARCOTICS OUT OF THAILAND INTO THE WORLD MARKET. I HAVE PERSONALLY FAMILIARIZED MYSELF WITH THE ENFORCEMENT, INTELLIGENCE, INCOME SUBSTITUTION AND US-THAI COOPERATION ASPECTS OF THIS PROGRAM. MY DCM, MR. MASTERS, HAS ACTED AS THE NARCOTICS COORDINATOR OF THIS MISSION AND HAS DEVOTED MORE OF HIS PERSONAL TIME TO THIS PROBLEM THAN ANY OF THE OTHER ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED BY THIS MISSION.

4. ON A PERSONAL BASIS I STRONGLY URGED THAT THE DEPARTMENT AUTHORIZE ADDITIONAL M-16 RIFLES FOR THE BORDER PATROL POLICE BUT WE WERE UNABLE TO DO THIS BECAUSE OF EXISTING LEGISLATION. I PERSONALLY PRESENTED THE TWO HELICOPTERS WHICH WE FURNISHED THE THAI POLICE TO LT. GENERAL PRACHUAB LAST SEPTEMBER. I HAVE PERSONALLY VISITED THE MAJOR SMUGGLING CENTERS OF THE NORTH AND SOME OF THE SNO STATIONS THERE AND HAVE FREQUENTLY REVIEWED, COMMENTED UPON AND ENCOURAGED THE INTEGRATED OPERATIONS CONDUCTED IN THE NORTH AND CLOSELY COORDINATED BY OUR CONSUL IN CHIANG MAI. ALSO, AFTER CAREFUL REVIEW THIS MISSION HAS APPROVED THE EXPANSION OF DEA OFFICER PRSONNEL IN THAILAND FROM 18 TO 30 SPACES.

5. I SAW CONGRESSMAN WOLFF AND HIS PARTY A NUMBER OF TIMES DURING THEIR VISIT HERE EVEN THOUGH THEIR VISIT COINCIDED WITH COMPETING VISITS BY TWO SENATORS AND THE CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE USAF. CONGRESSMAN WOLFF GAVE NO INDICATION
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TO ME OR TO ANY OFFICERS OF THE EMBASSY THAT HE WAS NOT SATISFIED WITH THE EFFORTS BEING MADE BY THIS MISSION AND THE COOPERATION WE WERE RECEIVING FROM THE THAI GOVERNMENT. IN FACT, HE WAS QUITE COMPLIMENTARY. IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN EVIDENT FROM EVERYTHING CONGRESSMAN WOLFF SAW HERE THAT THE THAI ARE DOING AN INCREASINGLY EFFECTIVE JOB AGAINST NARCOTICS, AND THIS DESPITE THE FACT THAT SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS MIGHT SOMETIMES DICTATE A LESS FORCEFULL

POLICY. WHEN PROVIDED GOOD OPERATIONAL INTELLIGENCE,
THE THAI HAVE ACTED AGAINST NARCOTIC TRAFFICKERS.
A CASE IN POINT IS THE SEIZURE LAST YEAR OF 377 KILOGRAMS
OF OPIUM FROM A KACHIN INDEPENDENCE ARMY CAMP NEAR CHIANG
DAO IN FORTHERN THAILAND. CONGRESSMAN WOLFF HIMSELF SAID
THAT ONE OF HIS PURPOSES IN COMING TO THAILAND WAS TO EXPRESS
HIS APPRECIATION FOR THE INCREASED COOPERATION GIVEN THE US
BY THE RRG IN NARCOTICS CONTROL.

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W
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R 201111Z JAN 75
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9950

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BANGKOK 1024

EXDIS

FOR ASST SEC HABIB FROM AMBASSADOR KINTNER

6. ON JANUARY 14 I WROTE A THREE PAGE LETTER TO CONGRESSMAN
WOLFF EXPRESSING MY APPRECIATION FOR HIS VISIT HERE, IN WHICH
I STATED, AMONG OTHER THINGS, "I KNOW THE THAI ALSO APPRECIATE
YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF THEIR EFFORTS IN THE DRUG FIELD. HAVING
THEIR OWN ADDICTION PROBLEM, THEY UNDERSTAND WELL THE
EMPHASIS WHICH YOU PUT ON THE DANGERS WE FACE IN THE U.S.
FROM WHAT YOU CALLED THE 'INSURGENCY OF DRUGS' NOW ENDANGER-
ING THE YOUTH OF AMERICA. SOMETIMES THE THAI BECOME DISCOURAGED
BY THE ENORMITY OF THE PROBLEM. YOUR STRESS ON THE POSITIVE
SIDE OF WHAT THEY HAVE ACHIEVED AND YOUR STRONG EXPRESSIONS
OF SUPPORT WILL ENCOURAGE OUR THAI FRIENDS TO ATTACK THE
NARCOTICS PROBLEM WITH RENEWED ENTHUSIASM AND VIGOR
"FINALLY, CONSIDERING THE BROADER RESPONSIBILITIES YOU ARE
ABOUT TO UNDERTAKE, I HOPE YOU HAD A CHANCE TO CONSIDER THE PAPER
'TESING TIME FOR US-THAI RELATIONS' WHICH I ASKED CAL
MEHLERT TO SHOW YOU. THAILAND REMAINS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT
TO THE UNITED STATES IN MANY WAYS, AND I MOST SINCERELY
HOPE WE WILL HAVE YOUR SUPPORT IN MEETING OUR NATIONAL

INTERESTS HERE."

7. I BELIEVE THE ROOT OF CONGRESSMAN WOLFF'S COMPLAINT IS HIS FRUSTRATION WITH CONTINUED US UNWILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT HIS ADVOCACY OF SOME KIND OF EXPLOITATION OF THE SHAN DISSIDENT INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENTS AS WEAPONS AGAINST TRAFFICKING. HE HAS THE IDEA (PROBABLY FOSTERED BY ADRIAN COWELL AS A SPOKESMAN FOR SSA) THAT IF WE SOMEHOW HELP THE SHANS THEY
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IN TURN WILL BE WILLING TO MAKE A DEAL WITH US THAT WILL END PRODUCTION AND TRAFFICKING IN THE SHAN STATE. WE ATTEMPTED TO COUNTER THIS CONCEPT, NOT ONLY ON POLITICAL GROUNDS BUT ALSO THE VERY PRACTICAL GROUNDS THAT THE SHANS ARE A RELATIVELY SMALL ELEMENT IN THE TRAFFICKING PICTURE AND COULD NOT DO WHAT THEY CLAIM. DURING TRAVELS IN NORTH THAILAND MEHLERT POINTED OUT TO CONGRESSMAN WOLFF THAT:

(A) IT IS NOT THE GUB WHICH IS TRAFFICKING, BUT (AMONG OTHERS) THE REBEL ELEMENTS TO WHICH CONGRESSMAN WOLFF APPEARS ATTACHED. MEHLERT TOLD WOLFF THAT IT WOULD SEEM MORE LOGICAL FOR HIM TO USE ANY INFLUENCE HE HAS WITH THE SHANS TO PERSUADE THEM TO MAKE THEIR PEACE WITH THE GUB;

(B) EVEN IF ALL THE REBEL GROUPS WERE TO BE GRANTED INDEPENDENCE TOMORROW, IT IS UNLIKELY THAT PRODUCTION AND TRAFFICKING WOULD BE MATERIALLY AFFECTED. WITH INDEPENDENCE FOR ALL THE DISSIDENT FORCES IN NORTHERN BURMA (WHICH IS ALMOST WHAT EXISTS NOW IN VIEW OF THE WEAKNESS OF GUB ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROL), THERE WOULD ONLY BE A CONTINUATION OF THE PETTY WAR-LORDISM WHICH IS CHARACTERISTIC OF LIFE THERE TODAY. WITHOUT STRONG CENTRAL CONTROL, AND WITH CONTINUED DEMAND FOR NARCOTICS, TRAFFICKING AND PRODUCTION WOULD SURELY CONTINUE.

8. FOR YOUR INFORMATION I JUST RECEIVED A NOTE FROM CONGRESSMAN WOLFF, SIGNED LESTER, THANKING ME FOR THE COURTESIES EXTENDED TO HIM BY THE MISSION AND ADVISING ME "THE TRIP WAS MOST PRODUCTIVE." POX VOBISCUM.
KINTNER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, DOCUMENTS, DRUG CONTROL, POLICIES, DRUG TRAFFIC, VISITS, INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 JAN 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BANGKO01024
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750021-0052
From: BANGKOK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750138/aaaabhpv.tel
Line Count: 211
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 75 STATE 012253
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <23 JUL 2003 by ElyME>; APPROVED <20 NOV 2003 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CONGRESSMAN WOLFF'S VISIT TO THAILAND
TAGS: SNAR, OREP, TH, US, (WOLFF, LESTER L)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006